

MINT OF THE UNITED STATES,

MELTING & REFINING DEPARTMENT,

Philadelphia, 16th July - 1879

Sir,

Permit me to draw your attention to the late employment of my men for aiding in cleaning the boilers, not so much for finding fault with what is past as to take wisdom for the future. Knowing that only able-bodied men could endure the heat, I excluded the older & feebler men, and detailed the rest for the boiler work. The whole set of detailed men of both sides of the Mint were arranged in several gangs, to work the usual amount of 8 hours in the day, each gang 20 minutes at a time in the boilers.

I here remark that experience has shown that where men are working in mines or drifts, with the thermometer over 110° F., it is found necessary to allow them to work only 5 minutes at a time, in order to keep them in perfect health. As our work was to be kept up for only 8 hours each day, & during some 8 or 10 days,

Hon. A. Loudon Snowden.

Suptd.

It seems to me that a 10 minutes shift would be as much as would be just & proper for the men, Besides this experience of others, the late experience showed that 20 minutes was too long a period, for several were so severely handled by the length of exposure, that they are at this moment unfit for work, altho struggling through their task.

I am sorry to complain of one thing. The order was that one set of men should stay in 20 minutes, & that the next gang should inform them of the lapse of time, so that these last might take the place of the former. It thus happened, not once, nor twice, but often, to our men, that the next gang did not give them notice for 30 minutes, & the consequence was that more than one of my men came near to fainting, & one had to be hauled ^{out} ~~having~~ ^{no} inherent strength left. Whoever gave the order for such replacement, had a much stronger confidence in human nature, than I have; I believe it came from Mr Greer, who I am sure intended all right by the arrangement, but was a little too trusting in the men.

{ Hon. A. Loudon Snowden }
 { 7/16-79 Suptdt }
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As the best men seemed to be needed for the boiler-work, I named 12, six of whom were my melters; yet in spite of their strength several are enfeebled, too much to work, & yet all are at work, save one, struggling manfully to do their duty. Through all the severe work, I never heard a single growl, or fault finding with the requisition for work. One melter, not quite as strong, lost two melts on Saturday, condemned for not being sufficiently mixed; & possibly the accident, which then happened to him, may have been partly caused by his want of ability to work actively. While extinguishing his fire mitts, which often take fire in the hurry of melting & casting, a little more water than usual must have been dipped up by them, so that in handling a stirrer or dipper over the pot of melted metal, the water fell into the latter, when it exploded, & blew the whole pot of melted metal through the whole melting room, leaving scarcely a sherd of the melting pot to be seen. The melter, Moore, barely escaped with his life, but was badly burned; & when he reported yesterday for duty, I found his desire to fulfil duty far beyond his ability & sent him home at once to consult a surgeon.

{ Hon. A. Loudon Snowden }
 { 7/6-79 Suptt. }

4.
We gathered up all the grains we could find in the room,
of the remainder, several hundred ounces, will gradually be
collected from floor, fuel, wood work, &c. &c. in course of time

As the thermometer, beginning at 78° on our high
grounds near Bryn Mawr, gives promise (it is now fulfilling
it) of reaching 95° at least, I respectfully solicit that
my men be required to make only 24 melts instead of
the usual 30 melts, I am sure I can vouch for their ma-
king up the loss in this month, if it should prove necessary.

Very respectfully yours

J. H. Booth

M. & R.

Hon. A. Loudon Snowden

Superintendent

444 9/10

U. S. Mint, Melter and Refiner's Department,
PHILADELPHIA, PENN.,

July 16, 1879
Mr. C. Booth
Melter and Refiner.

Reports that the
men are required
to work too long
at a time in
cleaning the boiler.

In See Jno. A. Grier
Genl. Dept. No.

No. of Enclosures,

Received July 16th, 1879.

[Abstract:] Reports that his men are required to work too long at the time in cleaning the Boiler.
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